



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO

17 South High Street, Suite 650 • Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone (614) 469-1505 • Fax (614) 469-7918
www.lwvohio.org

LWV Ohio Releases Report Showing Legislative Districts Rigged for Predictable Results, Calls on Ohio Voters and Legislators to Approve Redistricting Reform

For Immediate Release

Contact: Carrie Davis, 614.469.1505

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Columbus – Today, the League of Women Voters of Ohio and fellow redistricting reform supporters gathered in the Ladies' Gallery of the Ohio Statehouse to mark the anniversary of women's voting equality and to release a new report that shows how gerrymandering undercuts that equality.

"On August 26th, we celebrate Women's Equality Day, which marks 95 years since women gained the constitutional right to vote. That same year, 1920, the League of Women Voters was founded," said Carrie Davis, of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

"The League stands for the protection and equality of all voters. Gerrymandering threatens that equality."

Today, the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) released "Predictable Results II", a follow-up to our earlier report that examines how Ohio's legislative districts were drawn to reach very specific results. Over two election cycles, in 2012 and 2014, the results have been, in a word, predictable.

- In the U.S. House, the results were 100% predicted by the maps. No districts were won by the political party not favored by the maps. Several races were won by large margins.
- There was also 100% accuracy in the Ohio Senate, with no districts won by the party not favored by the maps. It is noteworthy that, in addition to several districts being won by large margins, there were quite a few races where the disfavored party did not even field a candidate.
- Ohio House races overwhelmingly went to the party favored by the maps.
 - In 2012, only 2 of 99 seats (2%) went to the opposing party not favored by the maps. The map's party index predicted 98% of the results.
 - In 2014, 5 seats changed parties. However, 2 of the 5 were the two 2012 seats flipping back to the party favored by the maps. Only 3 new seats went to the party not favored by the maps. This means the map's party index predicted 97% of the results.

"Our elections will continue to be entirely predictable until we change how maps are drawn," said Ann Henkener, LWVO Redistricting Specialist. "The current winner-take-all district map drawing system has stymied Ohio voters for forty-plus years."

Under Ohio's current redistricting system, whichever political party controls the map-drawing every ten years can almost guarantee how many seats each party will win, by packing party supporters and opponents into a set number of districts. This results in the majority party winning a larger proportion of seats relative to its strength in the electorate. For example, the party who drew Ohio's U.S. Congressional districts only received 57% of the total statewide votes in 2014 but won 75% of the districts.

"There is widespread agreement that Ohio's redistricting process needs to change," added Henkener, "and it needs to happen now, without further delay."

The League of Women Voters of Ohio endorses “Fair Districts for Ohio,” which will appear as Issue 1 on the November 2015 ballot. Issue 1 will change how Ohio draws state legislative districts. It will create a new bipartisan Ohio Redistricting Commission that will have to follow strict criteria designed to keep communities whole and better reflect voter preferences.

Passing Issue 1, however, is only half of the reform needed. We need to extend these same new rules to how Ohio’s U.S. Congressional districts are drawn. LWVO urges the General Assembly to pass SJR 2, a proposal sponsored by Republican Senator Frank LaRose and Democratic Senator Tom Sawyer, to place an issue on the 2016 ballot asking voters to apply the “Fair Districts for Ohio” rules to Congressional redistricting.

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